

A NEW PHALANGER FROM NORTH QUEENSLAND.

BY HEBER A. LONGMAN.

PSEUDOCHIRUS (HEMIBELIDEUS) CERVINUS, sp. nov.

THROUGH the kindness of Mr. E. J. Holyoake, the Queensland Museum received in April last the skin of a female "fawn-coloured opossum" from the dense scrubs of the Atherton Tableland. This differed so markedly from all known forms that it was noted as new. The sender had recognised it as a very rare animal, stating that residents in the district for thirty years had heard of it from the blacks as being very uncommon and only procurable in the one locality. Unfortunately, the skull of the first specimen was not available, but, in response to requests from the Director, Mr. Holyoake promised to do all in his power to obtain another. To his efforts we are now indebted for a second skin (male) and an accompanying skull.

This very handsome Phalanger belongs to the subgenus *Hemibelideus*, which Collett rightly established in 1884 for the reception of *Pseudochirus lemuroides* with its comparatively short and broad skull.¹ Externally, however, its general appearance is so very distinct from Collett's species that cranial divergencies were also anticipated. Although these to be noted are by no means remarkable, it must be remembered that Oldfield Thomas² and Collett have placed on record the striking cranial affinities of some species of *Pseudochirus*, and also of *P. lemuroides* itself to the so-called Flying Phalanger, *Petaurus volans*, Kerr.

Form and dimensions similar to *P. lemuroides*, but the tail is equal in length to both head and body. Fur long, fine, soft and silky, nowhere adpressed, also long on the limbs and tail and even sparsely covering the dorsal surface of the claws. Colour uniform fawn above, below and on limbs, with the exception of the lumbar region, which is decidedly lighter, and the head; the distal portions of the hairs are glossy, but the proximal parts are silver gray. Head much lighter from the nuchal region forward; throat and chest scarcely varying from dorsal colouring. Ears almost naked inside, long-haired on the posterior part of their hinder surfaces; 20 mm. in length but not projecting much beyond the long fur.

¹ Collett, P.Z.S., 1884, p. 385. Collett, Zool. Jahrb., 1887, p. 923.

² Oldfield Thomas, B.M.C. Marsupialia, 1888, p. 185.

Tail longer than those of our specimens of *lemuroides*, evenly clothed with fur like a *Trichosurus*; portion naked underneath not so long as head; extreme tip naked all round.

The skin of the male specimen is not in good condition, but no definite colour differences are manifested by the sexes.

Skull and teeth closely resembling our series of *P. lemuroides*. Across the zygomatic processes the new species is relatively wider, and the nasals reach almost to the base of the first incisor. The naso-premaxillary suture exceeds that of the naso-maxillary. The lower jaw has on each side a distinct foramen in the masseteric fossa, a feature which, although inconstant in many of the *Phalangeridae*, is apparently not found in *P. lemuroides*. Taking into consideration the points above noted, *P. cervinus* otherwise presents almost a facsimile of the skull and lower jaw of *P. lemuroides* as figured by Collett (loc. cit.).

Skull dimensions: (♂) Length 55 mm.; width 38 mm.; max. length nasals 16 mm., greatest breadth 8 mm., least breadth 3.3; length of anterior palatal vacuities (foramina incisiva) 4 mm.

In this specimen the suture between the basi- and pre-sphenoid bones is obliterated by postero-lateral processes of the vomer which apparently unite with pterygoid extensions; it is thus impossible accurately to obtain the facial index.

Loc.: Atherton Tableland, North Queensland.

Type in Queensland Museum: Reg. No. J14/2016.
